



# Mental Health and Disability Services

## Redesign 2011

### Definitions of Mental Health Professional as Defined in Iowa Code & Administrative Rule

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Source: DHS-MHDS

	Mental Health Professional as defined in Iowa Code 228.1	Mental Health Professional as defined in IAC 441 (24).	Qualified Mental Health Professional as defined in Iowa Code 229.1
Definition	<p><i>"Mental health professional"</i> means an individual who has all of the following qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The individual holds at least a master's degree in a mental health field, including but not limited to, psychology, counseling and guidance, nursing, and social work, or the individual is a physician and surgeon or an osteopathic physician and surgeon.</li> <li>b. The individual holds a current Iowa license if practicing in a field covered by an Iowa licensure law.</li> <li>c. The individual has at least two years of post-degree clinical experience, supervised by another mental health professional, in assessing mental health needs and problems and in providing appropriate mental health services.</li> </ul>	<p><i>"Mental health professional"</i> means a person who meets all of the following conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Holds at least a master's degree in a mental health field including, but not limited to, psychology, counseling and guidance, psychiatric nursing and social work; or is a doctor of medicine or osteopathic medicine; and</li> <li>2. Holds a current Iowa license when required by the Iowa professional licensure laws (such as a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a marital and family therapist, a mental health counselor, an advanced registered nurse practitioner, a psychiatric nurse, or a social worker); and</li> <li>3. Has at least two years of postdegree experience supervised by a mental health professional in assessing mental health problems, mental illness, and service needs and in providing mental health services.</li> </ol>	<p><i>"Qualified mental health professional"</i> means an individual experienced in the study and treatment of mental disorders in the capacity of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A psychologist certified under Chapter 154B; or</li> <li>b. A registered nurse licensed under chapter 152; or</li> <li>c. A social worker licensed under Chapter 154C.</li> </ul>

The definitions in Iowa Code 228.1 and Chapter 24 are essentially the same, although the wording in Chapter 24 refers specifically to “psychiatric nursing” as opposed to “nursing” in 228.1. Both definitions do not limit the type of Master’s degrees in a mental health field to those listed. The qualified mental health professional definition in Chapter 229.1 is much more restrictive regarding the types of professionals that meet the standard for “qualified mental health professional”, however, the reference to a registered nurse licensed under Chapter 152 or a social worker licensed under Chapter 154C could include individuals without Master’s degrees as these code sections include individuals at all levels of licensure. Chapter 229 does not define what qualifies as experienced in the study and treatment of mental disorders. It excludes licensed mental health counselors and licensed marital and family therapists. Chapter 229 allows the examining physician to consult with, or request the participation of a qualified mental health professional during an examination of an individual who is under commitment proceedings. This limits the consultation and evaluation to the limited number of professionals listed under Chapter 229. An individual may have been previously receiving services from a licensed mental health counselor or licensed marital and family therapist who could complete the evaluation, possibly with more effectiveness and efficiency as they would already have knowledge of the individual’s history and presenting issues.